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News Releases and other News Material

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December 13 - December 17, 1993

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For further information about this booklet contact Charles Hobbs, editor, News Division, Office of Public Affairs, Room 406-A, U.S Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250 or call (202) 720-4026.

News Releases-

Release No. 1019.93
Bruce Merkle (202) 720-8206

1993 WHEAT, BARLEY, OATS PRODUCERS TO RECEIVE DEFICIENCY PAYMENTS

WASHINGTON, Dec. 13 -- The U. S. Department of Agriculture announced today that approximately \$1.1 billion in deficiency payments will be made to eligible producers of the 1993 wheat,barley and oats crops.

Wheat producers will receive about \$940 million, barley producers about \$125 million (before any reduction due to the collection of malting barley assessments) and oat producers about \$5 million. The payments will be made in cash through Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service county offices. Payments will be made beginning December 13.

Deficiency payments are made under the 1993 wheat, barley and oats programs when the national weighted average market prices received by producers during the first five months of the marketing year (June through October) are below established target price levels.

Deficiency payment rates are based upon the difference between the target price for the commodity and the higher of the five-month average market price or the basic price support rate. Producers who received advance deficiency payments will have their 5-month payment reduced by the amount of the advance.

Calculation of 5-Month Deficiency Payment Rates
(\$ per bushel)

	Wheat	Barley	Oats
A. Target Price	4.00	2.36	1.45
B. Basic Loan Rate	2.86	1.62	1.02
C. 5-Month Market Price	2.97	1.69	1.34
D. 5-Month Deficiency Payment Rate (A - C)	1.03	0.67	0.11
E. Advance Deficiency Payment Rate	0.525	0.26	0.075
F. Net 5-Month Deficiency Payment Rate (D - E)	0.505	0.41	0.035

Producers who used the so-called "0/92" provisions of the 1993 wheat, barley and oats programs were guaranteed a minimum payment rate of \$1.05 per bushel for wheat, \$0.52 for barley and \$0.15 for oats. Wheat and oat producers will receive this guaranteed rate less any advance in deficiency payments they have already received. Since the actual deficiency payment rate exceeds the guaranteed minimum payment rate, barley producers will receive the actual deficiency payment rate less any advance payments.

Barley deficiency payments will be reduced for producers subject to the malting barley assessment. The reduction will be five percent of the state (if available) or national weighted average malting barley price received by producers during the first five months of the marketing year. The state and national malting barley prices and assessment rates are:

Five-Month Price Assessment Rate
(\$ per bushel)

Idaho	2.90	0.145
Minnesota	1.96	0.098
Montana	2.22	0.111
North Dakota	1.85	0.925
South Dakota	1.76	0.088
U.S.	2.30	0.115



Release No. 1020.93
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HOLLYWOOD BUSINESSMAN SENTENCED IN \$2.3 MILLION FOOD STAMP TRAFFICKING SCHEME

WASHINGTON, December 13--The owner of a Hollywood milk delivery company was sentenced in Los Angeles last week to prison and ordered to pay restitution after having pled guilty to charges of illegally trafficking and redeeming \$2.3 million in food stamps.

Miquel A. Presumido, owner of Arpech Dairy, was sentenced to 27 months in federal prison to be followed by three years of probation. He was also ordered to pay \$115,000 in restitution to the government.

USDA's Acting Inspector General Charles R. Gillum said Presumido, a citizen of Argentina who is in the U.S. illegally, began a home dairy delivery service in 1986 and established Arpech Dairy in March of 1989. Starting in September of 1989 and continuing through June of 1992, Presumido, who was authorized by USDA to accept and redeem food stamps for the sale of dairy products, agreed to purchase food stamps for cash from dairy route drivers who were not authorized by USDA to accept food stamps. Presumido would then redeem the illegally obtained food stamps for cash, charging the drivers a fee of 5 percent of the total value of the food stamps he purchased.

When his trafficking in food stamps became a full-time job, Presumido stopped selling dairy products altogether in order to concentrate his efforts on illegally buying food stamps. Presumido was often buying between \$2,000 and \$6,000 worth of food stamps a day from other persons who had obtained them illegally.

Food stamps may only be used to purchase food items at businesses authorized by USDA to participate in the food stamp program. Gillum said that businesses which are authorized to accept food stamps but which engage in food stamp trafficking or provide an outlet for other persons to launder illegally obtained food stamps will be actively investigated and prosecuted.

The guilty plea was a result of an investigation by USDA's Office of Inspector General. The case was prosecuted by U.S. Attorney Terree A. Bowers and Assistant U. S. Attorney Kimberly Dunne of the Central District in Los Angeles.



Release No. 1021.93
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CONCERN ABOUT HUNGER IN AMERICA BRINGS 300 PEOPLE TO USDA FORUM

WASHINGTON, Dec. 13--The first in a series of four regional hunger forums announced by Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy attracted more than 300 participants today in Burlington, VT.

Assistant Secretary of Agriculture Ellen Haas and Sen. Patrick Leahy, D-VT, presided over the forum and heard from people who experience hunger in their daily lives, those who work in the public and private sectors to alleviate hunger, local government officials, and other concerned New England residents.

Espy, who was scheduled to be at the conference but remained in Geneva negotiating a trade agreement, called for the forum to get input from real experts who are fighting and dealing with hunger every day. "For many adults and children in the United States, going to sleep hungry is not a threat, it's a regular occurrence. And, it must end."

At the forum, Haas said, "Hunger is one of the most haunting problems facing our country today. Because hunger does not exist in a vacuum, the forum looked at the linkages between hunger, health and poverty, childrens' ability to learn, economic stability, and community development. The Clinton administration is committed to helping end hunger in America."

Leahy, chairman of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry, presided with Haas at the forum and told the audience, "You will hear a lot of statistics today about hunger, but remember that statistics are numbers with the tears washed away. Each number represents a person -

- perhaps a child, an elderly citizen, or someone who is disabled... America has to get its priorities straight. We need to use more of our resources for our children. Every hungry child is an empty promise."

Among those testifying today was Dr. Richard Narkewiez, past president of the American Academy of Pediatrics, who stressed the link between nutrition and health. He noted that babies participating in the WIC program are healthy and underscored the importance of the nutrition education component in the program.

Steve Hingtgen, who, as director of the Chittenden County Food Shelf provides food to those in need, said, "Food pantries, soup kitchens and all of us who struggle every day to keep people from going hungry are being crushed by the demand...We all must remember that food shelves are not the solution. We are only a merciful stopgap."

Violet Goodin, a Sharon, Conn., program participant, described her life as a roller coaster. As a mother who suffers from multiple sclerosis, she appreciates the one-on-one advice she gets from the WIC clinic. She emphasized that jobs, good wages, and affordable housing, are the keys to empowerment. She also praised EBT (electronic benefits transfer) as a method of restoring dignity for program participants.

Melinda Doyle, of Brattleboro Drop-In Center, Brattleboro, Vermont, testified about delivering food to an elderly woman. "When I went to the refrigerator, all that was there was a cup of milk, some moldy bread, and catfood."

Hunger Forum: Agenda for the Future is the first of four regional forums that will focus on regional obstacles and solutions in the fight against hunger in America's communities. In June, Espy convened the National Hunger Forum in Washington, D.C. That conference brought together the largest and most distinguished group since the White House Conference nearly 25 years ago. These regional forums will continue the dialogue begun in June about alleviating hunger in America. Future forums are scheduled in McAllen, Texas; Kansas City, Mo.; and Dayton, Ohio.



Release No. 1022.93

Kendra Pratt (301) 436-4898

USDA PROPOSES TO DECLARE SOUTH KOREA FREE OF TWO DESTRUCTIVE ANIMAL DISEASES

WASHINGTON, Dec. 14 -- The U.S. Department of Agriculture proposed today to declare South Korea free of foot-and-mouth disease and rinderpest, two foreign diseases of ruminants and swine.

This proposal would allow fresh, chilled and frozen meats and dairy products from ruminant animals to be imported into the United States from South Korea under restrictions. However, because there is limited U.S. demand to import these products from South Korea, the proposal is not expected to have a major impact on current trade patterns.

"We are proposing to accept the South Korean application for free status based on the documentation their officials have provided and our on-site evaluation of their animal health programs," said Billy G. Johnson, deputy administrator of veterinary services in USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

APHIS will consider an application for declaring a country free of FMD and rinderpest one year following eradication if no cases of the disease were reported and no animals were vaccinated for the disease. Rinderpest has never existed in South Korea. The last FMD outbreak was in 1934.

APHIS' National Center for Import and Export has reviewed the application and documentation supplied by the South Korean government, which included an official disease questionnaire and a complete set of the country's agricultural laws and regulations. An APHIS official also traveled to South Korea to evaluate the capability of the country's veterinary services, laboratory and diagnostic procedures, vaccination practices and enforcement of animal health regulations.

This proposal was published in the Nov. 30 Federal Register. To comment, send an original and three copies of written comments referring to docket number 93-127-1 on or before Jan. 31, 1994, to Chief, Regulatory Analysis and Development, PPD, APHIS, USDA, Room 804 Federal Building, 6505 Belcrest Road, Hyattsville, Md. 20782. Comments once received may be reviewed at USDA, Room 1141, South Building, 14th and Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C., between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays. Persons wishing access to the reading room are encouraged to call (202) 690-2817 to facilitate entry.



Release No. 1024.93
Ed Curlett (301) 436-7255

USDA COMPLETES MEDFLY ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

WASHINGTON, Dec. 14 -- The U.S. Department of Agriculture today announced completion of its Mediterranean Fruit Fly Cooperative Eradication Program Environmental Impact Statement.

"This document analyzes potential environmental effects of a program to eradicate the Medfly from the continental United States," said Lonnie J. King, acting administrator of USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

Notice of this action was published in the Nov. 26 Federal Register. Copies of the statement may be read at the APHIS Reading Room, 1141 South Building, 14th Street and Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C., between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays.

Copies of the environmental impact statement may be reviewed at, or obtained from, the following offices:

USDA, APHIS, BBEP, EAD
Room 543, Federal Building
6505 Belcrest Road
Hyattsville, Md. 20782

USDA, APHIS, PPQ
9580 Micron Avenue, Suite I
Sacramento, Calif. 95827

USDA, APHIS, PPQ
3505 25th Avenue, Building 1 North
Gulfport, Miss. 39501

USDA, APHIS, PPQ
3505 Boca Chica Boulevard, Suite 360
Brownsville, Texas 78521

USDA, APHIS, PPQ
Blason II, 1st floor
505 South Lanola Road
Moorestown, N.J. 08057

For further information contact Harold T. Smith, Branch Chief, Environmental Analysis and Documentation, BBEP, APHIS, USDA, Room 543, Federal Building, 6505 Belcrest Road, Hyattsville, Md. 20782. Call (301) 436-8963.



Release No. 1026.93
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Judith Bowers (202) 720-2032

USDA GENETIC RESOURCES COUNCIL TO MEET

WASHINGTON, Dec. 14--The National Genetic Resources Advisory Council will meet here Dec. 15-16 at the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Administration Building, 14th Street & Jefferson Drive SW.

Among items scheduled for discussion are new technology for storing and preserving valuable plant, animal and microbial germplasm, the USDA Microbial Collection at Peoria, Ill., and the status of the strategic plan for germplasm preservation and enhancement.

The 16-member council was appointed last year by the Secretary of Agriculture to provide guidance on the department's National Genetic Resources Program. The meeting begins at 8:30 a.m. Dec. 15 in Room 104.

"The meeting is open to the public and persons may participate as time and space permits," said Henry L. Shands, director of the genetic resources program. Shands, associate deputy administrator for genetic resources at USDA's Agricultural Research Service in Beltsville, Md., said persons may also file written comments before or after the meeting.

Shands said the genetic resources program, authorized by Congress, governs all aspects of genetic material important to American food and agriculture production--including genetic resources of plants, farm animals, insects, farm-raised catfish and microbiological organisms.

For a copy of the agenda, contact Shands at Bldg. 005, Rm. 215, BARC-West, Beltsville, Md. 20705, telephone (301) 504-5059.



Release No. 1028.93

Tom Amontree (202) 720-4623

Bruce Merkle (202) 720-8206

STATUTE MANDATES 1993-CROP WHEAT NOT ELIGIBLE TO ENTER FARMER-OWNED RESERVE

WASHINGTON, Dec. 15-- U.S. Department of Agriculture's Commodity Credit Corporation executive vice president Grant Buntrock said today that in accordance with stature, the 1993-crop wheat will not be allowed into the Farmer-Owned Reserve. Buntrock said that due to rising prices and a tight supply/demand situation relative to the statutory trigger levels, conditions do not exist to allow entry of 1993-crop wheat into the Farmer-Owned Reserve. Under provisions of the Agricultural Act of 1949, as amended, eligibility for entry of 1993-crop wheat into the FOR must be announced by December 15.

Buntrock said that, by statute, entry is not permitted unless at least one of two conditions is met: the average market price for wheat for the 90 days preceding the announcement is less than 120 percent of the wheat price support rate or the 1993/1994 estimated wheat ending stocks-to-use ratio is more than 37.5 percent.

"As of December 14, the 90-day wheat average market price of \$3.31 per bushel was much higher than 120 percent of the wheat price support rate, which is \$2.94 per bushel." Buntrock said. "The estimated 1993/1994 wheat ending stocks-to-use ratio is 26.8 percent, much less than the 37.5 percent level needed to allow entry. Thus, USDA does not have authority to allow 1993-crop wheat into the FOR."

Buntrock said making the announcement now will help producers plan their loan and marketing activities accordingly.



Release No. 1029.93

Robert Feist (202) 720-6789

USDA ANNOUNCES 1994 PEANUT POUNDAGE QUOTA

WASHINGTON, Dec. 15--Grant Buntrock, administrator of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, today announced the national peanut poundage quota for the 1994 marketing year as 1,350,000 short tons, or 2.7 billion pounds.

Buntrock said the quota announced today is the minimum permitted by statute and is 146,000 short tons (292 million pounds) fewer than the 1993 quota. He said that USDA is required to announce no later than December 15 the quota for the 1994 peanut marketing year which begins August 1, 1994.

The Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1938, as amended, requires the national poundage quota for the 1994 crop of peanuts to be equal to the sum of estimated domestic edible, seed and related uses in the 1994 marketing year, but not less than 1,350,000 short tons. The estimated need for these uses is 1,333,000 short tons. Therefore, for the 1994 marketing year, the national peanut poundage quota is 1,350,000 short tons.

The 1994 crop national poundage quota will be allocated to each state based on the state's share of the 1990 crop national poundage quota.

Decreases in a state's poundage quota will be allocated among farms eligible for quotas.



Release No. 1034.93
Tom Amontree (202) 720-4623

PROPOSED ETHANOL POLICY IS BIG WIN FOR U.S. AGRICULTURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

WASHINGTON, Dec. 15---Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy applauds the announcement of two important regulatory actions that will increase market opportunities for corn-derived ethanol and lead to significant reductions in urban smog. In addition to the final reformulated gasoline regulation, the Administration proposed a rule to assure a 30-percent market share for renewable oxygenates in the reformulated gasoline program. Increasing the use of renewable oxygenates such as ethanol and ETBE (ethyl tertiary butyl ether) will spur investment in ethanol production and provide greater economic opportunities for rural America.

"This is an early Christmas present to the American farmer. The best way to improve financial conditions for U.S. agriculture is by expanding demand for our products. The proposed renewable oxygenates program does precisely that and fulfills the President's commitment to the American public. Increased use of ethanol would generate new market demand for corn and other commodities. This would improve farm prices and farm income and create new jobs in rural areas, while protecting the environment and increasing national energy security." Espy said.

Currently the U.S. is producing about 1 billion gallons of ethanol annually. A billion gallons of ethanol uses about 400 million bushels of corn, nearly 5 percent of the annual corn crop. Each 100 million bushels of corn used annually in ethanol production increases farm-level corn prices 4-6 cents per bushel.

A 30-percent market share for ethanol and ETBE in the reformulated gasoline program would significantly increase demand for corn. As more cities choose to join the reformulated gasoline program, at least half of the nation's gasoline eventually could contain ethanol or ETBE.



Release No. 1035.93
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Mary Dixon (202) 720-4623

MARKETING AND INSPECTION SERVICES ASST. SECRETARY GENE BRANSTOOL RESIGNS

WASHINGTON, Dec. 16 -- The following statements were released today by Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy and Assistant Secretary Gene Branstool on Mr. Branstool's resignation effective Dec. 31.
Assistant Secretary Gene Branstool:

"I am announcing my resignation today to return to my family and farm in my home state of Ohio. It has been a great honor to serve in President Clinton's Administration and to help Secretary Espy bring a new spirit of change to the USDA.

"We have worked hard to help farmers and ranchers and to focus on improving food safety by overhauling the meat inspection system. I feel confident that we have made many changes that will benefit all of America.

"I have been impressed with the dedication of USDA employees and I thank all of them who have helped me during my year at USDA. I am confident that they will continue to push forward with the changes begun this past year.

"I want to thank Secretary Espy for his support and confidence and I know he will continue to make USDA the very best it can be for all Americans."

Secretary Espy said:

"During his tenure at USDA, Gene Branstool has helped this department make positive strides forward in areas ranging from improving the nation's meat inspection system to taking steps to improve the quality of America's grain. He has faced these and other difficult challenges with a high degree of dedication and sensitivity to the needs of the American public.

"Like many people who leave their home area to serve in Washington, Gene misses his home state of Ohio, his farm and his family. I can sympathize with his decision. However, I want him to know that we will miss him and we will always value his dedication to farmers, consumers and public service. His positive impact on the Marketing and Inspection Services Division will remain long after he has returned to Ohio."



Release No. 1037.93

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Mary Dixon (202) 720-4623

USDA EMPHASIZES PUBLIC HEALTH WITH NEW CDC LIAISON APPOINTMENT

(Appointee Will Serve As Liaison Between FSIS and CDC)

WASHINGTON, Dec. 17 -- Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy today announced the appointment of a liaison from the Food Safety and Inspection Service who will work with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to investigate and trace E. coli 0157:H7, a deadly bacteria that causes foodborne illness.

"It is critical for USDA to establish a strong relationship with CDC, the federal agency responsible for investigating foodborne outbreaks," Espy said. "Public health expertise is an essential component of FSIS."

Dr. Phyllis Sparling, the current director of the FSIS Eastern Laboratory in Athens, Ga., will begin work with CDC in early January.

"I expect the new USDA liaison officer to assist CDC in the investigation of foodborne outbreaks and to help integrate food safety issues related to meat and poultry into the planning and day-to-day operations at CDC," said Espy. "This is one of many changes that is taking place to improve the meat inspection system."

Espy said Dr. Sparling will focus on E. coli 0157:H7, the pathogen responsible for the foodborne illness outbreak in several western states in January. She will eventually report to a new Public Health Division being created within FSIS to oversee public health activities within the agency, including investigations, epidemiological activities and product recalls.

Espy said USDA is working closely with the Surgeon General's Office and with the U.S. Public Health Service to identify a physician with knowledge of foodborne diseases who could be detailed to head the new division.

Dr. Sparling, who has been with FSIS for seven years, has extensive experience in epidemiology, microbiology and veterinary medicine. She has worked as an in-plant veterinary medical officer with FSIS and USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

A graduate of Duke University, Dr. Sparling received her master's degree in veterinary medicine from Auburn University and her doctorate in veterinary medicine from the University of Georgia. She has also studied at the Johns Hopkins University School of Hygiene and Public Health and at CDC.

Dr. Sparling will be assigned to the Foodborne Diseases Branch at CDC and will serve as the main contact point between that branch and FSIS.

USDA already has a liaison representative from APHIS at CDC who deals extensively with issues regarding Salmonella enteritidis in eggs.

In addition to the CDC liaison and the formation of the Public Health Division within FSIS, some of the other changes in meat and poultry inspection Espy has ordered since January include the formation of a new review and assessment division to conduct unannounced inspections of meat and poultry slaughter plants, the hiring of 200 new inspectors and acceleration of an overhaul of the meat inspection system so that it will be science-based. On Oct. 21, a notice was placed in the Federal Register calling for suggestions of new science for the meat inspection system.



Release No. 1038.93
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USDA PROTECTS 16 NEW PLANT VARIETIES

WASHINGTON, Dec. 17 -- The U.S. Department of Agriculture has issued certificates of protection to developers of 16 new varieties of seed-reproduced plants including barley, bean, buffalograss, corn, lobelia and wheat.

Kenneth H. Evans, an official with USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service in Washington, D.C., said developers of the new varieties will have the exclusive right to reproduce, sell, import and export their products in the United States for 18 years. Certificates of protection are granted after a review of the breeders' records and claims that each new variety is novel, uniform and stable.

The following varieties have been issued certificates of protection:

- the Chilton variety of barley, developed by the Wisconsin Agricultural Experiment Station, Madison, Wis.;
- the Prize variety of field bean, developed by Gen-Tec Seeds Ltd., Woodslee, Ontario, Canada;
- the Topgun and Turfmaster varieties of buffalograss, developed by the Bamert Seed Co., Muleshoe, Texas;
- the LH223 variety of corn, developed by Holden's Foundation Seeds Inc., Williamsburg, Iowa;
- the CQ702rc variety of corn, developed by United AgriSeeds Inc., Marshalltown, Iowa;
- the Papermoon and Half Moon varieties of lobelia, developed by Sluis & Groot Research, Fort Wayne, Ind.;
- the Arapahoe variety of wheat, developed by the University of Nebraska Board of Regents, Lincoln, Neb.;
- the Coker 9024, Coker 9803, Coker 9835 and Coker 9907 varieties of wheat developed by the Northrup King Co., Washington, Iowa;
- the Dalen and Pontiac varieties of wheat, developed by AgriPro Biosciences Inc., Shawnee Mission, Kan.; and
- the Florida 304 variety of wheat, developed by the Florida Agricultural Experiment Station, Gainesville, Fla.

The certificates of protection for the Chilton barley variety, the Prize bean variety, and the Arapahoe, Coker 9024, Coker 9803, Coker 9835, Coker 9907, Dalen, Pontiac and Florida 304 wheat varieties are being issued for sale by variety name only as a class of certified seed and to conform to the number of generations specified by the owner.

USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service administers the plant variety protection program which provides marketing protection to developers of new and distinctive seed-reproduced plants ranging from farm crops to flowers.



Release No. 1039.93
 Kim Kaplan (301) 344-2446
 Judith Bowers (202) 720-2032

PINK WITCH HAZEL RELATIVES RELEASED TO NURSERY TRADE

WASHINGTON, Dec. 17 -- A large evergreen shrub that bears pink flowers in late winter and early spring will be introduced for the first time in this country by the U.S. National Arboretum.

Of Chinese origin, the new Loropetalum cultivars "Blush" and "Burgundy" depart from the creamy white flowers and dark green foliage common to this shrub grown in the U.S., said Sylvester G. March, chief horticulturist at the arboretum here. The National Arboretum is part of the Agriculture Research Service, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's chief research agency.

"The process of introducing pink flowering Loropetalum is similar to that when the first pink flowering dogwoods were introduced after only white ones were available. Although not as commonly used as the dogwood in land-scaping, Loropetalum really should be used more, as it has many favorable traits," March said. "Having a wider color choice may help that."

He said the foliage of Blush starts off medium red-brown and matures to medium olive green, while Burgundy's dark red-brown foliage changes to dark olive green.

March said the cultivars have been distributed to about 40 nurseries and gardens for propagation and stock increase. They should be commercially available in about two years.

As a shrub, sometimes growing as high as a small tree, Loropetalum has graceful arching branches and resembles its close relative the witch hazel, he said.

March first noticed the pink-flowering Loropetalum in 1989 in a Japanese horticultural magazine, which noted the plant was of Chinese origin. No such varieties had ever been cultivated in the Western world. He asked John L. Creech, National Arboretum director emeritus, who was planning a visit to Japan, to obtain samples. Creech brought back plants of two distinct varieties used to propagate the new cultivars.

These new selections are easy to grow and prefer a slightly acid, peaty soil in full sun to partial shade, March said. The plants thrive as ever-greens in warm climates and are hardy to USDA hardiness zone 7, but lose their leaves in the colder zone.

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NOTE TO EDITOR: For details, contact Sylvester G. March, chief horticulturist, U.S. National Arboretum, Agricultural Research Service, USDA, Washington, D.C. Telephone: 202-475-4821.

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Release No. 1041.93
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 Mary Dixon (202) 720-4623

ESPY ANNOUNCES CHINA TO ACCEPT U.S. APPLES FOR THE FIRST TIME

WASHINGTON, Dec.-18 -- Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy tonight announced the signing of an historic agreement allowing apples from Washington State into China.

"For the first time, China is allowing American apples in commercial quantities into that country," said Espy, who discussed with Chinese officials the acceptance of U.S. apples during a trade mission there in October. This is a significant agreement.

"We see this to be the first in a series of steps that would open China up to imports of a wide variety of U.S. fruits and vegetables -- from all parts of our country. In fact, the outlook for greater exports of apples to China is exceedingly bright because of tremendous markets for U.S. apples that currently exist in other Asian countries -- specifically, Japan, Hong Kong and Taiwan.

"President Clinton and I are determined to continue to increase farm income through increasing farm trade."

Espy added that apples are already exceedingly popular in China.

Officials of the USDA’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service reached agreement with Chinese plant quarantine officials last week in China.

The agreement establishes the conditions for the entry of Washington apples into China. The first sale is expected in March.

The apples must come from designated orchards and be packaged in designated packaging facilities. The facilities must have a certificate of compliance with APHIS-approved procedures for export production.

After processing, the apples must be placed in a cold-temperature facility prior to shipment. "The USDA will ensure that the apple exports conform with China’s phytosanitary specifications," Espy said.



Program Announcements-

Release No. 1025.93
Gene Rosera (202) 720-6734
Charles Hobbs (202) 720-4026

USDA ANNOUNCES PREVAILING WORLD MARKET RICE PRICES, MARKETING CERTIFICATE RATES

WASHINGTON, Dec. 14--Under Secretary of Agriculture Eugene Moos today announced the prevailing world market prices of milled rice, loan rate basis, as follows:

- long grain whole kernels: 11.67 cents per pound
- medium grain whole kernels: 10.96 cents per pound
- short grain whole kernels: 10.87 cents per pound
- broken kernels: 5.84 cents per pound

Based upon these milled rice world market prices, loan deficiency payment (LDP) rates, gains from repaying price support loans at the world market price, and marketing certificate rates are:

	Loan Gain and LDP Rate	Marketing Certificate Rate
\$/Cwt.....	
--for long grain:	\$0.00	\$0.00
--for medium grain:	\$0.00	\$0.00
--for short grain:	\$0.00	\$0.00

These announced prices and rates are effective today at 3 p.m. EST. The next scheduled price announcement will be made Dec. 21 at 3 p.m. EST.



Release No. 1030.93
Bruce Merkle (202) 720-8206

U.S. TOBACCO INDUSTRY TO BUY 288 MILLION POUNDS OF 1994 FLUE-CURED TOBACCO

WASHINGTON, Dec. 15--The U.S. Department of Agriculture announced today that U.S. cigarette manufacturers plan to purchase 288 million pounds (farm sales weight) of 1994-crop flue-cured tobacco.

Grant Buntrock, administrator of USDA’s Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, said major domestic cigarette manufacturers are required by statute to report annually to USDA their intended purchases of flue-cured tobacco from U.S. auction markets and producers.

Data on intended purchases, average annual flue-cured exports for the preceding three years and the amount of tobacco needed to attain reserve stock levels is used to determine USDA's annual flue-cured tobacco marketing quota. However, the statute provides that the 1994 marketing year quota shall not be less than 90 percent of the 1993 quota. The 1994 quota will be announced by Dec. 15.

Buntrock said annual flue-cured exports for 1991, 1992 and 1993 averaged 391.3 million pounds, down 14.2 million pounds from the 1990-1992 average.

In 1993, manufacturers' intended purchases totaled 473 million pounds.



Release No. 1031.93

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USDA ANNOUNCES 1994-CROP FLUE-CURED TOBACCO PROGRAM

WASHINGTON, Dec. 15--The U.S. Department of Agriculture today announced the following provisions of the 1994 flue-cured tobacco program.

The national marketing quota for the 1994 crop is 802.6 million pounds, down 10 percent from 1993, according to Grant Buntrock, administrator of the USDA's Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service. The USDA is required to announce no later than Dec. 15 the quota for the 1994 marketing year which begins July 1.

The Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1938, as amended, requires the national marketing quota for flue-cured tobacco to be equal, within a range of three percent, to the total of domestic manufacturers' purchase intentions, exports of flue-cured tobacco (3-year average), and an adjustment to maintain loan stocks at a prescribed level. The total of the three factors equals 496.3 million pounds, 44 percent below last year's quota. However, the statute also requires that the 1994 quota cannot be less than 90 percent of the 1993 quota, which was 891.8 million pounds. Therefore, the national marketing quota for the 1994 crop of flue-cured tobacco will be 802.6 million pounds.

The national average yield goal remains unchanged at 2,088 pounds per acre.

The support level for the 1994 crop is \$1.583 per pound, up 0.6 cents from 1993.

The national acreage allotment for the 1994 crop is 384,387 acres, down about 10 percent from 1993.

For each farm, the 1994 basic quota will be 10 percent below the 1992 level.

The effective quota is expected to be about 799 million pounds, or about 89 million pounds below the 1993 level.

The statutory marketing assessment will be 0.7915 cents per pound on both growers and buyers, for a total of 1.583 cents per pound for the 1994-crop of flue-cured tobacco.

The no-net-cost program assessment will be announced later.

In a January 1992 referendum, producers approved acreage-poundage quotas for the 1992 through 1994 crops.



Release No. 1033.93

Bruce Merkle (202) 720-8206

USDA ANNOUNCES FINAL RULES FOR 1993 COTTON PRICE SUPPORT PROGRAM

WASHINGTON, Dec. 15 -- Final rules for the 1993 cotton price support program were announced today by Grant Buntrock, executive vice president of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Commodity Credit Corporation.

Buntrock said the rules are unchanged from the interim rules issued October 6, 1992.

The final rules were published in the December 13 Federal Register.



USDA ANNOUNCES PREVAILING WORLD MARKET PRICE AND USER MARKETING CERTIFICATE PAYMENT RATE FOR UPLAND COTTON

WASHINGTON, Dec. 16--Randy Weber, acting executive vice president of USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation, today announced the prevailing world market price, adjusted to U.S. quality and location (adjusted world price or AWP), for Strict Low Middling (SLM) 1-1/16 inch (leaf grade 4, micronaire 3.5-3.6 and 4.3-4.9, strength 24-25 grams per tex) upland cotton (base quality), and the coarse count adjustment (CCA) in effect from 5:00 p.m. today through 3:59 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 23. The user marketing certificate payment rate announced today is in effect from 12:01 a.m. Friday, Dec. 17 through midnight Thursday, Dec. 23.

The Agricultural Act of 1949, as amended, provides that the AWP may be further adjusted if: (a) the AWP is less than 115 percent of the current crop year loan rate for base quality upland cotton, and (b) the Friday through Thursday average price quotation for the lowest-priced U.S. growth as quoted for Middling (M) 1-3/32 inch cotton, C.I.F. northern Europe (USNE price) exceeds the Northern Europe (NE) price. The maximum allowable adjustment is the difference between the USNE price and the NE price.

A further adjustment to this week's calculated AWP may be made in accordance with this provision. The calculated AWP is 87 percent of the 1993 upland cotton base quality loan rate, and the USNE price exceeds the NE price by 3.21 cents per pound. Following are the relevant calculations:

I.	Calculated AWP	45.37 cents per pound
	1993 Base Loan Rate	52.35 cents per pound
	AWP as a Percent of Loan Rate	87
II.	USNE Price	62.30 cents per pound
	NE Price	- 59.09 cents per pound
	Maximum Adjustment Allowed	3.21 cents per pound

Based on a consideration of the U.S. share of world exports, the current level of cotton export sales and cotton export shipments, and other relevant data, no further adjustment to this week's calculated AWP will be made.

This week's AWP and coarse count adjustment are determined as follows:

Adjusted World Price

NE Price	59.09
Adjustments:	
Avg. U.S. spot market location	11.91
SLM 1-1/16 inch cotton	1.50
Avg. U.S. location	0.31
Sum of Adjustments	- 13.72
Calculated AWP	45.37
Further AWP adjustment	- 0
ADJUSTED WORLD PRICE	45.37 cents/lb.

Coarse Count Adjustment

NE Price	59.09
NE Coarse Count Price	- 56.41
	2.68
Adjustment to SLM 1-1/32 inch cotton	- 3.20
	- 0.52
COARSE COUNT ADJUSTMENT	0 cents/lb.

Because the AWP is below 52.35 cents per pound, the base quality loan rate for both the 1992 and 1993 marketing years, the loan repayment rate during this period is equal to the AWP, adjusted for the specific quality and location plus applicable interest and storage charges. The AWP will continue to be used to determine the value of upland cotton that is obtained in exchange for commodity certificates.

Because the AWP is below the 1993-crop loan rate, cash loan deficiency payments (LDPs) will be paid to eligible producers who agree to forgo obtaining a price support loan with respect to the 1993 crop. The payment rate is equal to the difference between the loan rate and the AWP. Producers are allowed to obtain an LDP on a bale-by-bale basis.

The USNE price has exceeded the NE price by more than 1.25 cents per pound for four consecutive weeks and the AWP has not exceeded 130 percent of the 1993 crop year base quality loan rate in any week of the 4-week period. As a result, the user marketing certificate payment rate is 1.96 cents per pound. This rate is applicable during the Friday through Thursday period for bales opened by domestic users and for cotton contracts entered into by exporters for delivery prior to Sept. 30, 1994. Relevant data are summarized below:

Week	For the Friday through Thursday Period Ending	USNE Price	NE Price cents/lb	User Marketing Certificate Payment Rate
1	Nov. 25, 1993	59.70	55.88	2.57
2	Dec. 2, 1993	60.00	56.58	2.17
3	Dec. 9, 1993	61.65	57.91	2.49
4	Dec. 16, 1993	62.30	59.09	1.96

Next week's AWP, CCA and user marketing certificate payment rate will be announced on Thursday, Dec. 23, at 5 p.m.



Media Advisory-

Release No. 1032.93

WASHINGTON, Dec. 15--USDA's General Sales Manager, Christopher E. Goldthwait, today said that the announcement time for subsidy export bid acceptances will not be changed, even though the Chicago Board of Trade decided to open most of its agricultural futures markets at 10:30 a.m. EST. Program Announcement bid acceptances will continue to be made available to the media at 9 a.m EST. They are then made available to the public at 9:30 a.m. EST through a FAX number for polling. To receive the releases, callers should set their FAX machines for polling and dial (202) 720-1728. Back copies of FAS program announcements and releases are available by mail only.

Contact: Wayne Baggett (202) 720-2156

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Backgrounder-

Release No. 1040.93

December 17, 1993

THE URUGUAY ROUND AND U.S. AGRICULTURE

On December 15, 1993, the United States reached an historic agreement in concluding the Uruguay Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations under the auspices of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). Highlights of the agreement include:

- ◆ Expansion of U.S. agricultural export opportunities through increased access in foreign markets.
- ◆ Significant reduction in trade distorting and price depressing export subsidies.
- ◆ No changes would be required in U.S. policies to meet the agreed cut in total internal support of 20 percent over 6 years.
- ◆ Assurance that trade-restricting sanitary and phytosanitary regulations are based on science.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE URUGUAY ROUND FOR U.S. AGRICULTURE

- ◆ The Uruguay Round agreement on agriculture will lead to substantially improved access for U.S. agricultural exports. Requiring countries to bind levels of trade-distorting support, export subsidies and import protection will reverse the increasing trend in protectionism that has shut exports out of a number of growing markets. Increased agricultural exports mean higher prices for U.S. farmers and higher farm income.
- ◆ Increased exports means more export-related jobs, particularly for high-value and value-added products.
- ◆ U.S. farmers will also gain from the increase in world income that will arise from the Uruguay Round agreement. Studies suggest that the increase in world income could more than \$5 trillion over ten years. The growth in world income will increase the demand for agricultural products, particularly for income-sensitive commodities like meat, fruits, vegetables and other specialty crops. Increased demand for beef, pork and poultry means that U.S. feed grain and soybean producers will gain as well.
- ◆ The Uruguay Round marks a beginning, not an end. The Uruguay Round agreement in agriculture is the first step in moving agriculture towards more liberalized markets. It commits GATT members to consider further liberalization. Consider the case of non-agricultural goods. Prior to 1947, the average tariff rate for non-agricultural goods exceeded 40 percent. After seven GATT rounds, the average tariff rate for these goods was just 5 percent. The Uruguay Round will reduce these tariffs further to 3.5 percent.
- ◆ Perhaps even more important for the future is the discipline the Uruguay Round will apply to countries who might otherwise choose the direction of closed markets, production-inducing internal supports, and subsidized exports. This has important consequences for our large trading partners that are currently outside of the GATT: China, Taiwan, and the nations of the Former Soviet Union.

BACKGROUND

Exports are Critical to Our Farm Economy

Exports use the production from about 1 of every 3 acres of U.S. cropland. Almost 20% of U.S. agricultural production is exported. Expanding export markets is key to U.S. agricultural prosperity. The challenge is to restore global purchasing power and open markets to get trade on the growth path again. In important markets for U.S. exports, populations and economies are growing at much higher rates than our own. We cannot grow the domestic market fast enough to utilize the steady increase in farm productivity.

Without continued export growth, U.S. farm income would stagnate or decline. During the 1950s, exports stagnated, crop surpluses mushroomed and we had to implement P.L. 480 and other programs to boost flagging export demand. During the 1950s, we lost 1.7 million farms, the largest amount in any decade in the 20th century. The 1970s was called the period of "export euphoria." During the 1970s, farm income grew rapidly. It fueled investment in U.S. agriculture that caused a boom in land prices. All of this was driven by exports. Farm exports rose from \$7.3 billion in 1970 to \$41 billion by 1980. The financial stress of the 1980s and the crash in equity values largely resulted from the inability to sustain export growth of the 1970s. If the 1980s had seen half the export growth of the 1970s, farm income would have been dramatically higher.

The Uruguay Round is Critical to Continued Export Growth

Since the GATT's inception nearly 45 years ago, agriculture has remained largely outside of its disciplines. Consequently, global agricultural trade has become distorted by a complex web of export subsidies, high internal supports, and protective trade barriers.

In fiscal 1993, U.S. agricultural exports totaled \$42.5 billion. Of this amount, 20 percent was in markets that impose some form of nontariff trade barrier. Almost 60 percent of the exports were commodities that faced subsidized export competition. And many markets were almost totally inaccessible to U.S. exports.

THE URUGUAY ROUND AGREEMENT

The Uruguay Round Agreement is an historic effort to open world agricultural markets, prompting increased trade and dynamic growth. The agreement covers four areas, including export subsidies, market access, internal supports, and sanitary and phytosanitary restrictions.

Export Subsidies

The agreement maintains the targeted cuts in export subsidies negotiated under the Blair House agreement with the EC in November 1992. Subsidized exports must be reduced by 21 percent in volume and 36 percent in value over 6 years from the 1986-90 base period.

Under the flexibility provisions negotiated by the EC and United States in Brussels earlier in December, countries may phase-in the export subsidy reductions in equal annual increments from 1991-92 levels over the 6 years. However, by the 6th year, subsidized exports can be no more than required by the Blair House agreement. The option to start from 1991-92 levels reflects the reality that trade levels for many commodities have increased since the original 1986-90 base period.

Multilateral cuts in subsidized exports will greatly benefit the United States because U.S. export subsidies are only used to counter subsidies of other countries, mainly the EC. Only a small share of U.S. agricultural exports are subsidized but nearly all EC exports are directly subsidized--in 1990 the EC spent about \$25 in export subsidies for every \$100 of exports compared to about \$1 of export subsidies for \$100 of U.S. exports.

Under the agreement, by the 6th year the EC will cut export subsidies by about \$5-\$7 billion from recent levels compared to a reduction of about \$370 million for the United States. Annual EC subsidized wheat exports will decline by over 8 million tons by the 6th year from current levels. Over the 6 years, total subsidized wheat exports from the EC and the United States will be reduced by about 45 million tons compared to a continuation of recent levels. By reducing the amount of commodities that can be subsidized on world markets, the agreement will create trade opportunities for U.S. producers who can compete effectively with producers elsewhere.

Market Access Provisions

Under the agreement, all non-tariff import barriers are converted to bound tariffs. Every product will have access to every country that is a member of the GATT. The United States will gain significantly from increased access opportunities for agricultural exports valued at about \$43 billion in fiscal 1993. U.S. market access commitments apply to about \$4 billion of imports now covered by import quotas.

Increased Market Access for U.S. Exports. U.S. exports will gain significant increases in market access. Under the agreement, Japan and Korea will end their effective prohibition on rice imports. Japan will increase access for beef, wheat, dairy products, vegetable oil, and a wide range of high-value specialty crops.

Korea will increase access for pork, beef, poultry, fresh oranges, frozen concentrate orange juice, and provide significant tariff reductions for a number of specialty crops. For example, based on U.S. export values, reductions in Korean tariffs will reduce import prices for almonds by about \$450/ton and for grapefruit over \$100/ton. The EC will also increase access for a variety of commodities including dairy products, almonds, walnuts, grapes, apples, beef and pork offal, and fresh asparagus while maintaining current access opportunities for feed grains, wheat and rice.

U.S. Market Access Commitments. The United States agreed to access commitments on beef, cotton, sugar, peanuts, peanut butter and paste, cheese, lowfat dry milk, butter, and several other dairy products. Adhering to the Uruguay Round market access agreement, the United States will convert import protection for these commodities to tariffs and assure access through tariff-rate quotas.

In-quota tariff rates will be low and maintained over the transition period. Over-quota tariff rates at higher levels, which reflect the tariff equivalents of existing import protection, will be reduced by the minimum 15 percent over the period. The U.S. commitment is fully consistent with the objective of eliminating non-tariff barriers and increasing market access around the world. The market access agreement for these commodities is expected to have little effect on U.S. producers because access is relatively small compared to domestic consumption and over-quota tariffs will moderate the effects of imports above the tariff-quota level.

Internal Supports

Under the Uruguay Round Agreement, total internal support is reduced by 20 percent from a 1986-88 base period. No changes would be required in U.S. policies to meet a cut in total internal support of 20 percent over 6 years. Total support is measured by a total Aggregate Measure of Support (AMS) which is the sum of commodity-specific AMSs and sector-wide AMSs. Support measures agreed upon as non-trade distorting are exempt from reduction. These permitted policies include conservation measures, crop insurance and disaster assistance, extension programs, and income payments that are not based on current production levels. Permitted policies are exempt from countervailing duty actions and other GATT challenges (e.g, nullification and impairment actions, serious prejudice actions).

The agreement exempts direct payments that meet certain criteria from the reduction in total support for the six-year implementation period. These criteria generally require that payments are made on a fixed quantity and on less than base period production. Both U.S. deficiency payments and the EC's direct payments under its Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) would be exempt from reduction commitments.

Exempt direct payments and other internal supports subject to reduction would not be exempt from countervailing duty actions. However, they would be exempt from other GATT challenges provided support for a specific commodity did not increase during the implementation period.

Program changes contained in the 1985 and 1990 Farm Bills and budget legislation have already reduced support substantially for most commodities. The EC and most other countries would be unlikely to have to change current policies to meet a 20 percent cut from 1986-88 levels.

Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

The sanitary and phytosanitary agreement builds on existing GATT rules to check the use of unjustified health-related regulations that restrict trade while assuring a country's right to protect food safety and animal and plant health. Under the agreement, sanitary and phytosanitary measures must be based on science. However, countries may maintain science-based standards that are stricter than international standards.

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Feature-

Release No. 1027.93

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TAKING FOOD TO A POTLUCK DINNER? IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE A POT SHOT!

WASHINGTON, Dec. 15 -- This is the time of year when we take food to other people's holiday parties or to the company Yuletide get-together. But too many times a potluck dinner for Christmas or Chanukah can turn out to be a pot shot at getting sick from food poisoning.

It doesn't have to be. In other words, a holiday party should be memorable -- for the good times and not because everyone got sick!

Many problems can be avoided if you follow a few food safety rules:

For example, a common problem is transporting food to the party or the office get-together. Perishable food should not be left out at room temperature for more than two hours. That includes the time you transport the food and have it sitting out at the party.

PARTY TIP: If you are traveling for a long time, you may want to take along an ice chest and keep the wrapped perishable food nestled in with ice cubes or freezer gels. If you don't have enough ice or freezer gels at home, they can be readily purchased at many larger supermarkets.

If perishable food is prepared ahead of time -- such as the night before or the morning of the party -- then it should be kept refrigerated until it's time to leave for the festivities.

PARTY TIP: Thoroughly cook all meat and poultry. Cut up large cuts of meat and poultry after cooking and place it in small, shallow containers so that food can chill down rapidly in the refrigerator to prevent food poisoning germs from forming.

PARTY TIP: If you are transporting hot foods, remember to keep hot foods hot for a short trip by wrapping in clean kitchen towels and then newspapers packed in a corrugated box. Or you may transport hot foods in an insulated "cooler."

Check ahead of time whether there will be adequate facilities available at the party for keeping cold food cold and pre-cooked hot food hot.

PARTY TIP: Ask whether there will be an oven available for thorough reheating of hot food or if there will be adequate refrigeration available for cold foods, such as cold cuts.

Will there be warming trays available? Will there be serving bowls or trays with ice to keep cold foods from reaching room temperature?

Remember the two hour rule!

And here is something that **MUST** be followed once you've transported the food to the party. The same sanitation and preparation rules you followed at home must be observed at the party. Keep hot foods hot at all times and cold foods cold. For hot foods, the magic temperature is 140° F or higher. For cold foods, the magic number is 40° F or lower. And if food is reheated, the internal temperature of the food should reach at least 165° F.

Everyone at the party should keep everything as clean as possible. Hands should be clean -- whether for food preparation or simply putting food out on the table. Utensils, cutting boards and food preparation services should be clean, especially if raw and cooked food will be coming into contact with the same preparation areas.

PARTY TIP: If raw meat or poultry comes in contact with a food preparation surface, make sure that surface is thoroughly cleaned before other food comes in contact -- whether it's more uncooked food -- and especially if it's cooked food.

Replenishing food at the buffet table should be done safely. Medium-sized serving dishes should be filled with piping hot food. Any food left over in the dishes should be discarded. Do not put fresh food into the same serving dish that already had food in it. Too many people may have had their hands in the bowl, if the food was "finger-sized."

Call the U.S. Department of Agriculture's toll-free Meat and Poultry Hotline. Home economists and dietitians will answer questions. Call 1-800-535-4555, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Eastern Time, Monday through Friday. In the metropolitan Washington, D.C. area, the number is (202) 720-3333.

Now go and enjoy those holiday parties. Just make sure an uninvited food poisoning guest doesn't come along!

